



## KOSOVO by Dukagjin Pupovci

### Overview

The Kosovo Education System was established in the period 1945-1968 by gradually devolving responsibilities from the government in Belgrade to the provincial authorities in Prishtina. The 1974 constitutional reform made Kosovo function as a self-governing unit within former Yugoslavia with its own structures wielding autonomous legislative, executive, and judicial powers, with Education as one of the key features of Kosovo autonomy. In line with the policy of Kosovo authorities to ensure equal education opportunities for all citizens, the period 1974-1989 was characterized by rapid increase of participation in primary and secondary education, with instruction in three languages: Albanian, Serbian and Turkish. By law, municipalities were responsible for the provision of elementary education (grades 1-8), whereas provincial government maintained responsibility for secondary education. Following the practice of the Yugoslav “self-management” model, responsibilities for curriculum development, quality assurance and even education funding were outsourced to a number of agencies operating at provincial and municipal level. In this setting, schools enjoyed substantial autonomy in organizing provision, managing budget, and appointing staff.

In March 1989, using threats of military force, the Government of Serbia effectively abolished the autonomy of Kosovo, and subsequently imposed a number of measures implementing centralized rule from Belgrade. An extraordinary feature of the Education System in the period 1990-1999 was the *de facto* existence of two parallel systems, one

functioning under the authority of the exiled Government of Kosovo, and the other one under the authority of the Government in Belgrade. Kosovo Albanian students and teachers were deprived of educational opportunities in many ways. Ethnic shifts were introduced in almost all elementary schools in Kosovo, whereas most Albanian-language secondary schools were not even allowed to operate in public buildings.

Continuous oppression by Belgrade against ethnic Albanians escalated in a bloody war, which ended in June 1999 by a NATO-led military intervention, and by placing Kosovo under the UN administration. One of the first post-war priorities for the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) was to re-establish the education provision based on legislation applicable in Kosovo prior to the start of NATO military intervention insofar it did not conflict with internationally recognized human rights standards [1].

In less than a year, a Joint Interim Administrative Structure (JIAS) effectively discharging the duty of the Kosovo Government was fully functional. The JIAS Administrative Department of Education and Science (DES) was co-headed by one UNMIK appointed co-head and one Kosovo co-head, and was responsible for overall management of the Education System in Kosovo. This was followed by immediate centralization of the Education System. Just for illustration, all teacher contracts for the school year 2000/01 were countersigned by the international co-head of DES. Following municipal elections in 2000, responsibilities for school infrastructure and employment of non-teaching staff were devolved to municipalities, whereas responsibility for employment of teaching staff and school management was retained by the central administration.

In 2001, two lines of education administration were introduced at municipal level – in addition to the Municipal Education Directorates (MED) that came out of local elections, the DES established Education Development Offices (EDOs) to ensure representation at the municipal level. In May 2001 UNMIK promulgated a Constitutional Framework which established Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) with the Government of Kosovo as its executive authority. Following 2001 national elections, UNMIK was gradually transferring increased administrative powers to the PISG, including the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) which took over responsibilities for the Education Sector.

The Law on Primary and Secondary Education was promulgated in October 2002 [2] paving the way for development of legislation regulating various sub-sectors of the Education System. A major devolution of authority from central to local level took place after declaration of independence of Kosovo when the Kosovo Assembly adopted a package of decentralization laws in line with the Comprehensive proposal for the Kosovo status settlement also known as the Ahtisaari Plan [3].

Two decades after the end of conflict in Kosovo, education provision in schools is organized in the Albanian, Serbian, Turkish, and Bosnian languages. It should be noted that Serbian schools in Kosovo effectively operate within the Education System of the Republic of Serbia, whereas this article focuses on schools operating within the Kosovo Education System.

## *The legal framework*

The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo [4] recognizes the right of every person to free basic education and states: *“Public institutions shall ensure equal opportunities to education for everyone in accordance with their specific abilities and needs”*. Also, the Constitution grants ethnic communities rights to receive education in their mother tongue to the extent prescribed by Law, *“with the thresholds for establishing specific classes or schools for this purpose being lower than normally stipulated for educational institutions”*. According to the Constitution, adaptation, amendment, or repeal of Laws on Education requires majority vote from both: all deputies holding seats on the Kosovo Assembly, and deputies holding seats reserved or guaranteed for representatives of communities that are not in the majority.

The Pre-University sub-sector is mainly governed by the following laws:

- *Law on Pre-University Education No. 04/L-032* [5] is a basic law which prescribes the major responsibilities of the central government in administering the Education System: to develop policies, draft and implement legislation; to promote a non-discriminatory education system and protection of vulnerable groups; to manage a system of licensing and certification of all teachers; to set the criteria for the evaluation and assessment of pupils in educational and/or training institutions; to organize and manage external assessment, and so on. In addition, the Government of Kosovo, through MEST and government agencies, retains responsibility for developing the Kosovo Curriculum Framework, setting standards related to its implementation, teaching personnel and school space, responsibility for inspection, etc.
- *Law on Education in the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo No.03/L-068* [6] was approved in June 2008 following the entry into force of the Kosovo Constitution. Essentially, this Law devolves certain responsibilities for managing Education System from central to local level, and is part of a larger decentralization package. Also, the Law regulates special rights of the Serbian community to use curricula and textbooks from the Republic of Serbia.
- *Law No. 04/L-183 on the Vocational Education and Training* was adopted in March 2013 [7]. The Law sets the following principles for the VET in Kosovo: inclusion; access, transfer and progress; theoretical learning and professional practice; current and future needs of the economy; supporting career development as integrated part of lifelong learning.
- *Law No. 02/L-52 on Pre-school Education* [8] promulgated in 2006 establishes a general regulatory framework for this level with particular focus on funding, employment of qualified staff, qualification of specialists, collection of data on children, supervision and discipline of staff, and curriculum.
- *Law No.06/L-046 on Education Inspectorate* [9] determines two major types of education inspection: administrative-legal and pedagogical inspection. Education

inspection remains one of the reserved powers of central government and also includes responsibility for teacher licensing.

- *Law No. 02/L-67 on Publishing School Textbooks, Educational Teaching Resources, Reading Materials and Pedagogical Documentation* [10] institutes the free textbook market, but the responsibility for approval of textbooks still rests with MEST.
- *Law No. 05/L-018 on State Matura Exam* [11] institutes the optional leaving exam for students of general secondary schools and vocational schools who want to pursue university studies.
- *Law No 03/L-060 on the National Qualifications* [12] was adopted by the Assembly in November 2008. The purpose of the law is to establish a national qualifications system, based on a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) regulated by a National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

Most of the bylaws (administrative instructions) adopted by the MEST relate to the Pre-University Sub-Sector. On the other hand, there are a number of laws as well as provisions from other education sub-sectors that affect the Pre-University Education.

## *The structure of government-operated schooling*

The Education System in Kosovo consists of five major levels:

- Pre-School Education (ISCED<sup>1</sup> 0, age 0-5),
- Primary Education (ISCED 1, grades 1-5, age 6-10),
- Lower Secondary Education (ISCED 2, grades 6-9, age 11-14),
- Upper Secondary Education (ISCED 3, grades 10-12, age 15-18),
- Higher Education (ISCED 5-8, age 18+).

The general structure of the Education System and mobility paths are diagrammed in Figure 1. The Public Education System operates through a network of 43 pre-schools, 948 elementary schools, 125 secondary schools, and seven public universities.

Pre-University Education System in Kosovo (ISCED 0-3) is decentralized and education institutions at this level are effectively run by local authorities. Municipalities are responsible for hiring of teachers and school principals, paying of staff salaries, infrastructure and school maintenance, staff training, monitoring of schools at all pre-university levels, etc. On the other hand, the central government is responsible for curricula and textbooks, school inspection and teacher licensing. Operation of schools is funded from the Special Education Grant allocated to the municipalities on per-capita basis by the central government, whereas municipalities may allocate funds for goods and services to schools based on a certain municipality-to-school funding formula.

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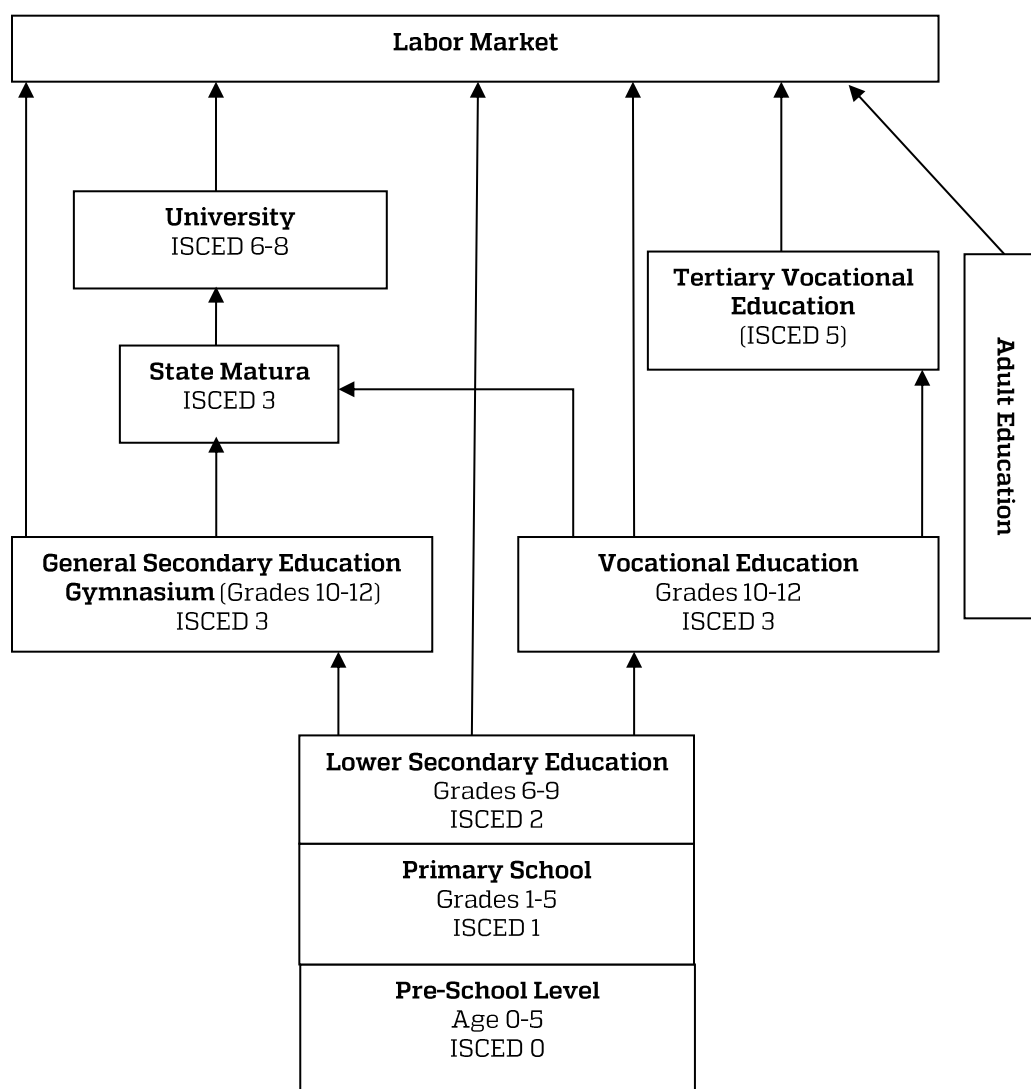
<sup>1</sup> ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education 2011 as adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at its 36th session in November 2011 - <http://uis.unesco.org/sites/default/files/documents/international-standard-classification-of-education-isced-2011-en.pdf>

*Pre-School Education* is organized by specialized pre-school institutions for children aged 0-5, and is characterized by a very low attendance rate compared to other Western Balkans countries, primarily due to limited intake capacity. The total number of children aged 0-4 attending specialized public pre-school institutions in Kosovo is 4,099 [13]. On the other hand, pre-primary level (Grade 0) is offered in specialized pre-school institutions and most elementary schools in Kosovo as a preparatory program for primary level, and is attended by 22,051 children aged 5 [13]. In terms of participation in this level, Kosovo lags behind all countries in Europe – Gross Enrolment Rate for children aged 0-5 in the school year 2017/18 was 18.61%, whereas for children aged 4-5 was 49.03% [14] which is still quite far from EU 2020 target of 95% [15]. Whereas pre-primary education offered in elementary schools is free, and funded from the Kosovo Budget, costs of attendance in specialized public pre-school institutions are shared between parents and municipalities.

*Elementary Education* comprises 5 years of primary, and 4 years of lower secondary education. Primary school classes are taught by one general teacher, whereas lower secondary school classes are taught by subject teachers usually specializing in one or two subject disciplines. Typically, textbooks strictly follow the curriculum structure, and are distributed free of charge to all students. From the organizational point of view, primary and lower secondary schools can be separate or united in single education institutions. According to official statistics, 235,161 students were attending primary and lower secondary schools in Kosovo in the school year 2018/19 [13].

*Upper Secondary Education* in Kosovo has two major streams: *General Secondary Education* (“Gymnasium”) and *Vocational Education*. There are two general secondary school programs with focus on Hard Sciences and Social Sciences. Duration of schooling is three years and, upon completion, students can take the state Matura exam if they wish to pursue university studies. Vocational Schools in Kosovo feature 17 different fields of study, each of them with significant number of profiles training students for certain vocations. As a rule, general secondary schools and vocational schools are separated, but there are combined schools in smaller towns offering both general education and vocational streams. During the school year 2018/19, 81,141 students were attending upper secondary education, 53% of them in the vocational stream [13].

Figure 1. Structure of the Education System in Kosovo



Adapted from [16]

In 2016, the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) approved the revised version of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF), which represents a major departure from content-based to competency-based curriculum. The KCF is designed in six curriculum key stages representing periods with common features in terms of children's development and curriculum requirements. They constitute the main reference points for defining key competencies to be mastered, student progress and achievement requirements, the organization of learning experiences, access and assessment criteria, as well as specifying the institution responsible for their achievement. The structure and organization of the curriculum according to curriculum key stages is shown in Table 1. All public schools in Kosovo follow the KCF.

**Table 1.** The Curriculum key stages of Education

International Standard Classification of Education	Formal levels of the education system	Curriculum key stages
ISCED-3	Upper secondary education Grade 12	Curriculum key stage 6: Consolidation and specialization
	Upper secondary education Grades 10–11	Curriculum key stage 5: General and professional development
ISCED-2	Lower secondary education Grades 8–9	Curriculum key stage 4: Reinforcement and orientation
	Lower secondary education Grades 6–7	Curriculum key stage 3: Further development and orientation
ISCED-1	Primary education Grades 3–5	Curriculum key stage 2: Reinforcement and development
	Primary education Grades 1–2	Curriculum key stage 1 Basic acquisition
ISCED-0	Pre-primary grade	
	Age 0–5	Foundation curriculum key stage: Early childhood education

Source: [17]

## *Freedom to establish non-state schools*

The legal base for private education in Kosovo was set by the 2002 Law on Primary and Secondary Education [2], and was further elaborated in related bylaws issued by MEST. The 2011 Law on Pre-University Education [5] also recognizes public-private partnership as a form of founding non-state schools although there are no examples of such schools operating in Kosovo.

In general, private educational institutions may be founded by any legal person registered in Kosovo, or by a citizen or group of citizens of Kosovo, except those who were “convicted of an offence of violence, or an offence of indecency involving children” [5]. Private educational institutions are required to obtain license from the MEST. The Law [5] states: *“The government licensing standard shall take account of the variety of teaching and learning methods employed by private institutions and the avoidance of risk to children and staff including provisions related to:*

- *adequacy of buildings and equipment, which must comply with international standards on health and safety and accessible design for persons with disabilities, including teaching rooms, cabinets, workshops and laboratories, fields or sports halls;*
- *library and computer rooms;*
- *number and qualifications of teaching staff;*

- *the Kosovo Curriculum Framework or a foreign curriculum recognized by the Ministry...*

Based on the respective bylaw [18], following the inspection and review of application, MEST issues licenses for the period from one to five years.

From the perspective of education legislation, private institutions in Kosovo are not required to identify themselves as for-profit or not-for-profit. However, schools operating as non-governmental organizations with public benefit status are exempted from paying the profit tax, provided that they offer their services to disadvantaged and/or vulnerable groups below market price. In reality, there are no such schools, but, in case of not-for-profit schools, there is a practice of waiving the requirement to submit bank guarantees aimed at protecting the financial interests of persons needing to complete their education at another institution in the event of closure. On the other hand, educational services are exempted from the VAT provided that they are supplied by recognized providers [19].

In the school year 2018/19, there were 13,918 children enrolled in private education institutions, which constitutes less than 4% of the total number children of the Pre-University level in Kosovo [13].

## *Homeschooling*

Despite legal provisions that recognize the option of home schooling, there are no practical arrangements for its implementation in Kosovo. By Law, “if the municipality estimates that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, and is not the subject of permanent expulsion under the Law, it shall serve a notice in writing on the parents requiring the parents to satisfy the municipality within the period specified in the notice that the child is receiving such education whether at home or otherwise”. And further “if the parents respond that the child is being educated outside the formal education and training system, either publicly-funded or private, the arrangements made by the parents, and the inspection arrangements, shall be subject to the approval of the Ministry, having consulted the relevant municipality.” [5]

## *Public funding of schools*

The main source of financing for the Pre-University Education System in Kosovo is, the so called, Specific Grant for Education (SGE), which originates from the Central Government Budget and is transferred to municipalities [5]. The SGE is defined and allocated to municipalities based on the Law on Local Government Finance [20], according to the allocation formula approved by the Grants Commission which takes into account the number of teachers and effective enrollment, as well as other factors like school location, class size, salaries of auxiliary staff, language of instruction, etc. [21]. Additional sources of financing are self-revenues generated by the educational



institutions which particularly applies to vocational schools, as well as additional funding from municipal revenues, depending on local financial opportunities.

Staff salaries are paid through the payroll system managed by the Ministry of Public Administration, capital investments managed directly by MEST or municipalities, whereas budget for goods and services is allocated directly to schools on per-student basis. Since 2008, education staff salaries in Kosovo have continuously increased and are among the highest in the Western Balkans Region. In September 2018, the base monthly salary for the secondary school teacher was €460, whereas teachers are entitled to extra payments depending on their years of service and pre-service qualifications. With respect to that, the average gross salary of a full-time teacher in September 2018 was slightly above €560 [22]. The new Law on Salaries in Public Sector [23] which enters into force in November 2019, defines coefficients for each position in the public service, whereas the coefficient value is determined on annual basis. With the current value of coefficient, basic teacher salaries, depending on qualification and position, will range from €538 to €621.

To increase participation in the pre-school education, the Law gives right to municipalities to provide financial support to private initiatives for early child care and education. In general, Ministry or a municipality may enter into a contract with an institution or individual to promote and to establish joint educational ventures, in which case such institution is treated as a private educational institution with mixed capital. However, there are currently no cases on such joint ventures in the Kosovo Education System.

As a rule, private education institutions of any level do not receive state subsidies, neither are parents eligible to receive any tuition support for children enrolled in those schools. Private schools apply tuition fees typically ranging from 800-6,000 EUR/year which limit access of the majority of Kosovo children to those institutions, although most of the institutions offer partial or full scholarships to excellent students.

## *Support for families*

Compulsory Education in Kosovo public schools is free of charge, but this provision is also effectively applied for pre-primary (Grade 0) and upper secondary level (Grades 10-12) as well. On the other hand, municipalities apply fees for attendance in specialized public pre-school institutions, which also receive subsidies from municipalities.

One of the principles set forth in the Law is that “Pre-university education is a joint responsibility shared between parents, educational and training institutions, municipalities and government” [5]. Each school has a parents’ council and parents are also represented in the school board. In addition, the Ministry establishes Kosovo Parents’ Committee with the role to represent the interests of parents and to encourage and enhance the role of parents as key stakeholders.

Each primary and lower secondary school has a catchment area defined by the municipality, and has to admit all children of compulsory school age living within the

designated area. The only exception is when parents decide that the child will attend school in an official language which is not represented in the respective school, in which case the municipality needs to offer alternatives. By Law, upper secondary schools “shall have catchment areas defined by agreement between municipalities (or where agreement cannot be reached, by the Ministry), according to the type of education or training concerned; and provision shall be made for voluntary transfer between different types of school at this level according to the interests and abilities of the pupil”. The parents of a pupil living outside the catchment area for a particular school may apply to the relevant municipality to enroll the pupil at that school; by Law such places shall be allocated in a fair manner at the discretion of the municipality on the basis of transparent, published criteria.

## *Distinctiveness*

Pre-University Education System in Kosovo operates on the basis of the Kosovo Curriculum Framework (KCF) a basic document which defines competencies and learning fields from ISCED levels 0-3 [17]. In addition, the Ministry develops core curricula for each ISCED level, effectively translating competencies into learning outcomes and setting the stage for development of school-based curriculum. Table 2 provides the hierarchy of basic curriculum documents in Kosovo. By law, core curriculum and school/institution based curriculum are considered to be integral part of the KCF, which serves as basis for the development of the subject syllabus.

Subject to the provisions of the Law on Education in Municipalities [6], educational institutions, both publicly-funded and private, may not deviate from the core curriculum. This means that schools are allowed to develop school-based curriculum and subject syllabi. However, in practice, both are developed by the Ministry and applied to public schools, whereas private schools often develop their own school-based curriculum and related subject syllabi. The choice of textbooks in public schools is limited to those officially approved by Ministry, but schools and teachers are allowed to use any supplementary teaching and learning materials deemed suitable, and decide about the most suitable teaching and learning methods. On the other hand, private schools may choose other textbooks provided they are approved by the Ministry through the regular school licensing process.

Special arrangements are in place for Education in Serbian language [6]. In principle, schools with teaching in the Serbian language may apply curricula or textbooks developed by the Ministry of Education of Serbia upon notification to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology of Kosovo (MEST), provided that MEST raises no objection within three months. In the event of an objection, the matter is referred to an independent commission composed of three MEST representatives, three representatives of Serbian Community, and one international member. In practice, Serbian language schools in Kosovo use curricula and textbooks developed in Serbia, but do not notify MEST nor accept any arbitration on disputes.

**Table 2.** Hierarchy of curriculum documents in Kosovo

Curriculum documents	System of learning outcomes
Kosovo Curriculum Framework	Key learning outcomes, which express the required level of achievement of the six key competencies upon completion of pre-university education.
Core curriculum for curriculum Key Stages 1–6	Key Stages 1–6 Learning outcomes, which express the required level of achievement of the six key competencies upon completion of each curriculum key stage. Learning outcomes for each curriculum area during curriculum key stages.
School-based curriculum	Subject learning outcomes for each grade (1-12)

Source: [17]

### *Decisions about admitting pupils*

As stated above, each primary and lower secondary school in Kosovo is required to admit all children of compulsory age living within its catchment area. The school director decides about the enrolment of children under the minimum compulsory school age based on recommendation by school professional-psychological service. Municipality decides on enrolment of children living outside school's catchment area based on application from parents.

Children with special needs of compulsory school age should also be allocated to the closest school, whereas enrolments in special schools are justified only where after expert assessment it is considered impractical to enroll a child in a regular municipal school. Official statistics reports about 3,645 children with special needs integrated in mainstream education institutions, and 365 in special schools [13]. Given the total number of children in Pre-University Education – 356,270 [13]– it is considered that children with special needs are underrepresented in the student population. This may be partly due to inaccuracies in school data, since there was no comprehensive assessment of children attending schools. Nevertheless, it is still estimated that only 40% of children with special needs are included in the Education System [24].

MEST determines intake capacity of each public upper secondary school, sets admission criteria based on success from previous schooling and leaving exam from compulsory education, and invites applications for enrolment of students, usually in the beginning of July. Students apply directly with schools concerned and admission decisions are reached by schools based on the criteria and procedures determined by MEST. For students who

were not successful in the first application round, a second call for applications is published, usually in August.

Private education institutions are allowed to apply their own admission procedures and criteria, whereas their conformity with the Law is determined through the school licensing process.

## *Decisions about staff*

School staff are divided into three major categories: teaching staff, school management staff and other staff. MEST sets terms and conditions of employment and grading of school management and teaching staff, whereas municipalities are responsible for implementation [5]. Other school staff are considered to be civil servants and employed pursuant to the Law on Civil Service [25].

Responsibility for teacher recruitment rests with the Municipal Education Directorates, whereas MEST sets qualification requirements and procedure. Minimum qualifications for teachers in the Kosovo Pre-University Education System are set by MEST [26]. Four-year bachelor's degree is a common requirement for new employments in the pre-school, pre-primary, primary and lower secondary level, whereas master's degree for new employments in the upper secondary level. Already employed teachers who do not meet new requirements are divided into two categories. The first category consists of teachers who were considered to be qualified at the time of their employment – their employment contracts are automatically extended. Other teachers are required to upgrade their qualifications within a certain timeframe. A MEST bylaw provides a general procedure for the appointment of new teachers. In principle, municipalities are free to determine their own specific criteria for the recruitment process. These criteria usually appear to be of quantitative nature including the grade point average during the studies, level of qualification, and years of experience, followed up by an interview. The current reality is that different municipalities determine various standards and assign different weight to different criteria, frequently ignoring the important dimensions of motivation and skills for entering the profession. In any case, the Ministry may instruct the municipality to terminate the employment of a teacher appointed contrary to the criteria established in the Law, or who is barred from work due to a medical condition or the order of a court, or who is otherwise disqualified according to the provisions of the applicable law [5].

Also, municipalities carry out selection of school directors and deputy directors in accordance with legal procedures and criteria determined by MEST [27]. A committee consisting of two members delegated by the Municipality and one member delegated by the Ministry is responsible to establish ranking of candidates and submit the proposal for appointment of the top ranking candidate to the Mayor who reaches the final decision.

## *Accountability for school quality*

In the education sector in Kosovo, devolution of responsibilities means that standards, curriculum, and assessment are decided at the central level, whereas local authorities have to abide by the central regulations while fulfilling their responsibilities within the education sectors. Mechanisms that link the central level quality control system incorporating standards for everything, from curriculum and teaching to local-level certification of teaching, national exams, and student diplomas are essential for ensuring an operable quality assurance system. However, there are serious difficulties in making such systems work.

At present, Quality Assurance is a shared responsibility of central level (MEST and related agencies), local level and school level. The primary responsibility for quality assurance rests with the MEST which is, inter alia, responsible for developing education policies and quality standards, drafting and implementing education legislation, national curriculum and external assessment, as well as manage the teacher licensing system [5]. With the new legislation in place [9], the Education Inspectorate is the central executive body for quality assurance and performs the following functions:

- the evaluation/assessment function – evaluates the quality of educational institution/service;
- monitoring function – controls the compliance of the educational institutions activity with the applicable legal and sub-legal acts;
- advisory function – advises the leaders and employees of educational institutions;
- informing/reporting function – informs the Minister, MEDs and educational institutions about findings of inspection and publishes them annually;
- supporting function in promoting the successful practices of educational institutions and development of educational policies.

Pedagogical Inspectorate is responsible for quality control and external evaluation of the education institutions of the ISCED level 0-4. Quality control function is carried out by evaluating the progress and the quality of the curriculum implementation in all subject areas, pedagogical aspects of teaching and assessment, teaching and learning materials and aids, and their appropriate use, functioning of the Parents' Councils, Students' Councils, Teachers' Councils and other professional bodies, etc.

On the other hand, the aim of external evaluation is to guarantee that educational institutions in Kosovo work according to the quality standards defined by the MEST. External evaluation is carried out in regular time periods (3 years) and the basis for external evaluation are the quality areas and quality indicators defined in the Quality Assurance Framework endorsed by MEST, as well as the school development plans endorsed by the school boards. External evaluation should be preceded by internal evaluation carried out by the school itself. [28]

Another important role of the Education Inspectorate is teacher licensing. There are four

levels of licenses for teachers: 1) Career Teacher; 2) Advanced Teacher; 3) Mentor Teacher; and 4) Meritorious Teacher. Initial career teacher license is issued upon conclusion of the induction phase and is valid for 5 years. Renewal of this license and obtaining other licenses requires certain amount of professional development credits as well as positive performance appraisal. The latter combines four major stages:

1. Teacher self-evaluation – 10%
2. Evaluation by the school director – 30%
3. The inspection / classroom observation – 30%
4. Planning and implementation of the entire lesson unit – 30%

Education Inspectorate is responsible for steps 3 and 4 which account for 60% of the score, as well as for preparing the final report of the teacher`s performance assessment and recommending renewal of the license, career advancement or revocation of the teacher`s license.

Main responsibility for quality assurance at municipal and school level rests with quality coordinators and school departments. Quality coordinators at school level are appointed based on the MEST Administrative Instruction 24/2016 [29], and their tasks and responsibilities include:

- Planning, organizing and monitoring of the quality management processes in the school;
- Supporting the process of school development planning;
- Informing teachers and school management on issues related to quality management;
- Supporting implementation of quality development measures;
- Leading the process of school self-assessment;
- Overseeing teacher planning; etc.

In schools with fewer than 150 students, the tasks of the quality coordinator are performed by the school director, whereas in other schools, the director appoints one of the employees for this task. Also, bylaw determines the workload of the quality assurance coordinator depending on the number of students, criteria the coordinator must meet and provides a full description of the tasks of coordinator`s work. In most cases, quality coordinators do not get extra payment for their work, but rather reduction in their teaching workload. Until the end of 2018, 645 quality coordinators were appointed in Kosovo schools [30]. Quality coordinators are also appointed at municipal level, primarily to coordinate and oversee the work of quality coordinators in schools under the responsibility of the municipality.

Another bylaw obliges schools to establish professional “activas” (departments) based on learning fields of the New Curriculum [31]. Their main responsibilities are to deal with academic issues within the specific learning field, including teacher professional development and mentoring of novice teachers. The bylaw does not foresee any

compensation for department leaders, while their appointment is made by the school director. The bylaw also provides options for establishment of joint departments of several schools (“Communities of Learning Together”) and at municipal level.

Quality assurance system in VET consists of internal mechanisms placed within VET providers, and external quality assurance which is the responsibility of National Qualification Authority (NQA) [12]. MEST Administrative Instruction No. 32/2014 prescribes that VET institutions should have quality assurance offices performing the following tasks: 1) progress monitoring; 2) counselling to heads of school departments on quality assurance matters; 3) coordinate monitoring of teachers; 4) undertake satisfaction surveys with relevant stakeholders, including students; 5) coordinate institutional self-assessment for accreditation purposes. Most vocational schools in Kosovo have quality coordinators, but there is almost no communication and exchange of information between MEST and quality coordinators.

## *Teaching of values*

As mentioned above, the Kosovo Curriculum Framework approved in August 2016 [17] embraces a competency-based perspective in order to address the diverse learner needs. The system of competencies includes: knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions and routines. The following are key competencies envisaged for the Kosovo Education System:

- Communication and expression competencies – Effective communicator
- Thinking competencies – Creative thinker
- Learning competencies – Successful learner
- Life-, work-, and environment-related competencies – Productive contributor
- Personal competencies – Healthy individual
- Civic competencies – Responsible citizen

Civic Competence – “Responsible Citizen” is largely based on one of the four pillars of learning highlighted in 1996 UNESCO Delors Report – “Learning to live together” [32]. KCF refers to “global citizenship” complementing the national citizenship justifying the need that rights and responsibilities individuals share are based on universal values, such as Human Rights, democracy and social justice. Further, KCF defines the learning outcomes the learner having mastered the civic competencies should achieve:

- understand their local and wider environment and how it functions (i.e. the structures, culture, practices, rules and expectations);
- uphold Human Rights as a basis for democracy;
- be aware of, and exercise their rights and responsibilities while being aware of, and respecting the rights of others;
- value diversity and demonstrate tolerance, respect and inclusive attitudes;
- manage and solve conflicts constructively;
- participate in democratic decision making at all levels;



- demonstrate HR values and principles in daily life (i.e. respect of personal dignity; fighting against prejudices and discrimination of all kind; fighting poverty and marginalization; promoting gender equality);
- show interest in public affairs and contribute to problem solving at school and community level;
- protect the natural and man-made environment and contribute to sustainable development.

The themes identified in the KCF are: Human Rights and Education for Democratic Citizenship (i.e. role of citizens in democratic societies/participatory citizenship; rights and responsibilities; community service); Gender equality; Peace Education; Intercultural understanding; Education for Sustainable Development; Global Education; Media Education; etc. These themes are addressed through various subject groups, primarily Society and Environment – History, Geography, Civics, Sociology, etc., but also through other learning areas.

This is further reflected in school curriculum and textbooks, and schools are free to choose the most appropriate teaching methods for delivery of the provision.

## *Special populations*

Roma, Ashkali and Balkan Egyptian<sup>2</sup> (henceforth, “Egyptian”) communities in Kosovo constitute less than 2% of the population and are considered to be the most vulnerable group from the perspective of social inclusion. The three communities, which share common characteristics, face the problem of life in poverty, segregation, difficult access to social services, housing, discrimination etc. The Constitution of the Republic of Kosovo guarantees fundamental human rights within Chapter II of the Constitution (Human Rights) and provides additional protection for the rights of the communities in Chapter III of the Constitution (Community Rights). Fundamental human rights and freedoms guaranteed through international covenants and instruments are also warranted by the Constitution and directly applicable in the Republic of Kosovo, where in cases of collision, these instruments prevail over legal and other acts of the public institutions [4]. The national legal system contains legal packages that are generated from the guaranteed rights of the communities and their members in various fields, including Education. For example, Law on Pre-University Education obliges all education institutions “to respect and promote community rights and their members as set forth by the Constitution and applicable law”, and has special provisions to ensure participation of minority communities in decision making. [5].

Since 2009, Kosovo Government has well defined policies on integration of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities focusing on Education, Employment, Social Welfare and Housing. In the field of Education, the focus was on improving participation of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities in all levels of the Education System. With donor

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<sup>2</sup> Balkan Egyptians are widely recognised as an ethnic group sharing common characteristics with Roma (Gypsies) and should not be confused with citizens of the Arab Republic of Egypt.



assistance, the three communities have been provided various forms of support to improve their education attainment, including: facilitation of enrolment in all levels of education, free supply of books and school materials, establishment of around 40 learning centers where elementary school children from the three communities receive homework assistance, scholarships and mentoring for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians pursuing upper secondary and higher education, reserved enrolment quotas in public higher education institutions, and so on.

According to a 2014 study by the Kosovo Statistics Agency [33] [34] the literacy level of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities is lower than that of the majority population and the same appears to apply to the educational attainment level of communities. Main data of this study that refer to the educational level of the communities are presented below:

- Literacy skills – Percentage of the youth of age between 15-24 who are able to read short sentences about everyday life or who have attended secondary or higher education:  
(a) Females – 72.8 % (98% nationally), (b) Males – 86.5 % (97.6% nationally).
- Attendance in early childhood education – Percentage of children of 36-59 months of age attending any pre-school program: 16.1% (13.9% nationally).
- School preparation programs – Percentage of children in grade one who have attended pre-primary schooling in the previous year: 53.9 % (75.5 % nationally).
- Net level of registration in primary education: 68.1% (91.6% nationally).
- Percentage of children of primary school age currently attending primary or secondary education: 85.3 % (98% nationally).
- Percentage of lower secondary school age children currently attending lower secondary or secondary school: 65.0 % (95.9% nationally).
- Percentage of children of secondary school age currently attending secondary school or more: 30.3 % (82% nationally).
- Working children – Percentage of children of 5-17 years of age, who are engaged at work: 16.6 % (10.7% nationally).

Government of the Republic of Kosovo has approved Kosovo Education Strategic Plan 2017-2021 [35], where measures are foreseen to achieve several specific indicators related to education of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities until 2021:

- Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in pre-primary education (target: 70%)
- Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in primary education (target: 95%)
- Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in lower secondary education (target: 85%)
- Inclusion of Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children in upper secondary education (target: 50%)

- Transition rate into upper secondary education for Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian children (target: 80%)

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